UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1932
11 July 1995

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Srebrenica falls to Bosnian Serb army as NATO planes bomb advancing Serbian tanks; Dutch peace-keepers forced to retreat and thousands of refugees flee fighting.

* Secretary-General in Athens meets with Greek President; at round-table conference says Organization is only universal body with mandate to deal with global problems.

* UNFPA releases State of World Population report; says global fertility levels can be lowered dramatically if countries meet reproductive needs and move towards gender equality in all aspects of life.

* Decolonization Committee adopts resolution on visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The town of Srebrenica fell to the Bosnian Serb army today. A United Nations spokesman said Dutch peace-keepers were forced to withdraw to Portocari, which is within the "safe area" north of Srebrenica. More than 20,000 refugees were crowded into Portocari and another 7,000 were heading north. Two United Nations observation posts north of Srebrenica have been shelled by artillery, forcing peace-keepers to withdraw from one post. The headquarters of the Dutch battalion in Portocari and the hospital in Srebrenica, where Dutch peace-keepers were helping the wounded, had also been shelled.

Earlier, two planes from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombed a column of Bosnian Serb tanks south of the enclave. The close air support came after Serb forces ignored a warning to stop firing on the Dutch peace-keepers who were in a line about two kilometers south of Srebrenica, separating the Bosnian Serb advance.

The situation for civilians in Srebrenica was now intolerable, Special Representative Yasushi Akashi said. He demanded complete freedom of movement for

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relief supplies into the enclaves, including Sarajevo. The recent events in Srebrenica and elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina should not detract from the urgent need to invigorate the political process and bring the parties together, Mr. Akashi continued. With the absence of dialogue, the humanitarian crisis already confronting innocent civilians in Bosnia was likely to deepen.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was in Athens today, where he met with Greek President Kostis Stephanopolous and thanked him for his country's outstanding support for the United Nations. They discussed a number of issues, including the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, and the relationship with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Secretary-General thanked Mr. Stephanopolous for his decision to attend the Summit of Heads of State and Government, which will be held in New York from 22 to 24 October to mark the UN's Fiftieth Anniversary. At the end of the meeting the President awarded the Secretary-General the Greek Grand Cross of Honour.

Later, the Secretary-General took part in a round-table discussion on the role of the United Nations on the eve of the 21st century. He said the UN was the only universal body with a mandate to deal with global problems and he characterized the Organization as a "think tank for the problems of tomorrow". He also said the UN was mobilizing the support of all segments of society, including the media, business community, parliamentarians, and non-governmental organizations around the world.

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Global fertility levels would be lowered dramatically if the world met reproductive health needs and moved towards gender equality in the next 20 years, according to this year's State of World Population report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). At a UN Headquarters press conference to mark World Population Day, Stirling Scruggs, the Chief of the UNFPA's Information and External Relations Division, said the report encourages countries to pursue global development by meeting the needs of each individual. It calls for gender equality in every aspect of life -- social, legal, family, employment -- and especially in the area of reproductive health and reproductive rights for women.

The world population, which is currently 5.7 billion, was projected to reach 7.1 to 7.83 billion by 2015 and between 7.9 to 11.9 billion by 2050, Mr. Scruggs continued. If individual health and education needs, especially in reproductive health and family planning, were addressed then population levels would be at the lower level. Reaching the estimated 120 million couples worldwide who wanted but did not have access to services would be an essential

first step. It required women's empowerment, political will and resources.

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The Special Committee on Decolonization has stressed the need to dispatch periodic visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories to facilitate the full, speedy and effective implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization. In a resolution adopted yesterday, the Committee called on the Administering Powers to cooperate with the United Nations by receiving visiting missions in the territories under their administration. The missions could assess the situation in the territories and ascertain people's aspirations regarding their future status.

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